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ABSTRACT

The initial aspects of this report discuss the selection of the sample and the field study research methodology employed. The second section, "First Year Teachers' Changing Perceptions," reviews the changes that first-year teachers perceived along seven dimensions: (1) teacher satisfactions; (2) discipline, fears, worries, frustrations, failures, and problems; (3) perceptions of self and/or self as teacher; (4) surprises; (5) career plans; (6) opinions of teacher training; and (7) how they measure their progress. The third section of the report, "First Year Teachers' Relationships with Others: One Dimension," focuses upon support/nonsupport and the kinds of interactions which create those feelings. Different kinds of supportive and nonsupportive relationships are discussed, and illustrative examples of each category are displayed. (Authors)

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THE FIRST YEAR TEACHER STUDY

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The First Year Teacher Study

Introduction

Folk knowledge and professional literature tell us that the first year of teaching is difficult. Advice such as, "Don't smile until Christmas," and "Show them who's boss on the first day" are commonly passed on to first year teachers (FYT) by their experienced peers in the faculty lounge. Popular novels such as Up the Down Staircase (Kaufman, 1964) and To Sir, With Love (Braithwaite, 1960), portray vividly the mental agonies of characters in their first teaching positions. Current movies and television programs pit the young idealist against the reality of schools and children.

What is the folk knowledge about beginning teachers? It is that teachers enter the classroom with sincere, but inflated estimations of the goodness of children, pupils' natural desire to learn, and the dedication of teachers and administrators to helping children learn. Because they like children, new teachers feel that they will never acquire the attitudes of the other teachers. They will teach so well that students will love them and learn the subject matter. Upon having to deal with students, continues the folk knowledge, beginning teachers discover that the day-to-day classroom situation thwarts their efforts to enact their ideals. Experiencing the pain of failure, teachers either quit, or adopt the attitudes and behavior of their fellow teachers.

A preliminary review of professional literature lends some support to the folk knowledge about first year teachers, although the literature is neither systematic nor in depth. The literature falls into four broad categories. A large, but not very illuminating category consists of the advice columns which appear every September in many teachers' periodicals. Advice from a selection of articles includes such opposites as suggesting that the neophyte get help as soon as s/he is stumped (Anderson, 1959), and admonishing that the beginner must solve problems him/herself (Coard, 1975). No one piece of advice is offered consistently in all columns. One common assumption, however, is that the first year will be difficult.

A second category encompasses essays by thoughtful professionals. The reflections are based on personal experience as or with first year teachers. Such reflections address the beginning teachers' surprises and shocks, and their efforts to conciliate their preconceptions with reality. Wright (1959), Jersild (1966), and Ryan (1974) are but three who have authored such articles.

Third are the quantitative studies on the first year of teaching. These gather information from teachers about a limited number of carefully defined variables, through questionnaires, structured interviews or classroom observations. Most involve a single collection of data, although teachers may also be asked to recall their feelings from earlier in the year.

The fourth category of professional literature aims at understanding the beginning teacher's experience from his/her own account of the year. Don't Smile Until Christmas (Ryan, 1970) has narratives of six teachers, followed by a reflective interpretive essay by Ryan, a teacher educator. Eddy's Becoming a Teacher: The Passage to Professional Status (1969) and Fuchs' Teachers Talk: Views from Inside City Schools (1969) are studies based on controlled self-reports of first year teachers. These narrative are revealing of the processes of teachers' inner change.

Professional knowledge about first year teachers is scant. The Ann Landers's are limited by their own changing memories of one-time experiences. Reflective essays claim no data base. Quantitative studies are usually limited by their small number of variables, their preconceptions about what the significant variables are, and by their once-only approach. The reflective interpretations of teachers' self-reports come closest to revealing the totality of the first year teacher's experience; these are limited because the scholarly reflections are based only on teachers' self-reports.

Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this investigation is to describe the life-space of the first year teacher (FYT). A study has been designed which has two main foci: "First Year Teachers' Changing Perceptions" and "First Year Teachers' Relationships

with Others: One Dimension." The major questions of the study were:

(1) What are the FYT's perceptions of himself as that self is related to teaching? Do these perceptions change over the year?

(2) What are the FYT's perceptions of his or her role as a teacher? Do these perceptions change over the year?

(3) What are the FYT's expectations for his or her teaching job? Do these expectations change over the year?

(4) What events does the FYT perceive as successes and failures? What happens in the classroom and in non-classroom school activities to contribute to these perceptions of success and failure? Do these perceptions change over the year?

(5) What are the FYT's perceptions and feelings about: (a) administrators, (b) students, (c) teacher educators, (d) peers, (e) parents?

(6) What is the nature of the relationships between the FYT and those in the school environment throughout the first year of teaching specifically with respect to: (a) administrators, (b) students, (c) teacher educators, (d) peers, (e) parents? Among the persons with whom the FYT has relationships, who has the greatest impact on his or her feelings, perceptions and behaviors?

(7) What evidence is there that the FYT's perceptions, feelings and behaviors are affected by persons or ideas outside the immediate school environment?

Methodology

With the view that most of the extant studies of first year teachers are limited by time span, view point, and lack of depth, the present study sought to overcome these limitations.

There is, in the professional literature on education research methodology, a call for the field study approach, and some examples of it. Urie Bronfenbrenner (1976), in advocating research in the ecology of education, proposes:

(1) That distortions of the real-life situation be kept at a minimum; that the ecological integrity of the setting be preserved. (page 22)

(2) That each participant's definition of the situation be assessed--how he or she perceives the setting and its various elements. (page 26)

In a similar vein to Bronfenbrenner's concern with the ecology is Lutz and Ramsey's advocating of anthropological field methods in education (1974). They also emphasize the need to study the complete system as it exists in reality. Hypotheses must be generated from a study of actual phenomena, not from correlations of small numbers of variables.

Smith and Geoffrey (1968) set an example of a field study in a classroom, terming their approach "microethnography."

They created an "inside-outside" phenomenon with Geoffrey, the teacher, as a participating observer, and Smith as a non-participating observer. With this methodology they hoped to bridge the gap between the "evils" of "good data about insignificant issues" and "abstract proverbs and maxims" which have characterized thought about education (page 20). They saw theirs as a hypothesis-generating study.

The research reported here is part of a larger field study, in which seven researchers observed and interviewed 18 teachers throughout their first four months of teaching.

Sample. The sample was obtained as follows. From lists of FYTs contributed by cooperating school systems representing urban, suburban, and rural areas, names were selected to represent a cross-section of grade level taught, subject taught, type of school, and sex of teacher. These people were invited, via telephone, to participate in the study. If a teacher declined, another was selected with the view of maintaining the diversity of the sample. Thirty-six teachers were contacted in order to obtain the final sample.

The final sample consisted of 18 teachers: 12 women and 6 men. In age, the teachers ranged from 22 to 45 years, but most fell into the 23-25 age group. Six taught in the elementary grades (K-5), 6 in the middle grades (6-9), and 6 at the senior high level (10-12). Fifteen of the 18 were regular classroom teachers, teaching such subjects as mathematics, physical education, and foreign languages, or such grades as kindergarten, fourth grade, and a fourth-fifth combination. Three of the 18 were special classroom teachers

in career centers or EMR programs.

The 18 teachers taught in 16 different schools, representing 6 school systems. Three schools were in rural settings, 12 in suburban settings, and 2 in urban settings. Three teachers were in parochial schools, one in a private school, and 14 in public schools.

Seventeen of the 18 teachers had received baccalaureate degrees from 11 different colleges. Sixteen of the 18 had participated in teacher preparation programs from 9 different institutions; 2 were, at that time, enrolled in training programs.

Interview procedure. Each of the 18 FYTs was assigned to one of the seven researchers. Teachers were formally interviewed at length during the month before school began, and three or four weeks later, and between November 15 and December 15.

The questions for the pre-school interview emerged from four sources:

(1) interviews of several teachers who had just completed their first year,

(2) a cursory examination of folk knowledge and professional literature,

(3) researchers' introspection of their own first year experience, and

(4) the research questions.

Questions for the second interview had an additional source--information from six classroom observations and several per-

sonal contacts with each teacher. The second and subsequent interviews could now probe areas which teachers were relating as important. As the months progressed, some of the original interview questions were dropped or altered, and others added, as priorities emerged from the teachers themselves.

Observation procedures. The teachers were observed for one hour twice a week during the first four weeks, and two to four times per month thereafter; many parts of their school day were observed. They were contacted often by phone. Periodically they were asked to respond to particular instruments.

Investigators. The team of seven researchers consisted of six advanced doctoral students and one professor, all of whom had taught in eithe. elementary or secondary schools. During the period of the study they were all working in the area of teacher education.

Despite agreement about the basic aims and methodology of the study, there were differences among the researchers. They had not been trained for reliability in observation and interviewing. Several differences were recognized and dealt with:

(1) Each had a notion of the first year of teaching based on his/her own experience. To make these notions as explicit as possible, researchers wrote and shared reflective narrative accounts of their first year of teaching.

(2) Each researcher had a set of judgments about the nature of teaching and what constituted good teaching. It was probable that these notions would influence the data selected to be recorded about first year teachers. To make these judgments explicit, researchers recorded periodically their personal evaluations of each teacher.

(3) Each researcher had his individual manner of interacting with other people. Further, each had a somewhat different view of how much he should intervene in the professional lives of the first year teachers. One researcher answered the teacher's questions and occasionally gave advice when needed, while another deliberately avoided reacting overtly to what the teacher told him. In an attempt to understand the possible effects which researchers may have had on what teachers thought and did, teachers were asked periodically to write about the relationship between themselves and the researchers; their writing would not be read by the researchers until the end of the study.

The First Year Teachers' Changing Perceptions

The First Year Teachers' Changing Positions

Problem Area

In a search for answers to "What is the experience of the first year teacher?" the field of perceptions seems vitally important. Folk knowledge and research suggest that the FYT's perceptions of self and role undergo challenge and change as the year progresses. This challenge and change is illustrated in the large proportion of literature about FYTs that is written by FYTs themselves.

As researchers seek to understand that first year, the teachers themselves must be the primary source of information about the meaning of experienced events; a teacher's perceptions reveal the particular reality of the year for him/her. Further, teachers' actions are born of their views of themselves, others, and their roles; hence any actions, observed by researchers or reported by teachers, cannot be explained without understanding the teachers' inside views. What is the kaleidoscope of joys and sorrows, struggles and achievements, thoughts and feelings about self and teaching?

Research Questions

The specific research questions, then, are as follows:

(1) What are the first year teacher's perceptions of him/herself as that self is related to teaching? Do these perceptions change over the year?

(2) What are the first year teacher's perceptions of his/her role as a teacher? Do these perceptions change over the year?

(3) What are the first year teacher's expectations for his/her teaching job? Do these expectations change over the year?

(4) What events does the first year teacher perceive as successes and failures? What happens in the classroom and in non-classroom school activities to contribute to these perceptions of successes and failures? Do these perceptions change over the year?

Perception is defined as consisting of (1) description; characterization (of self, role...), and (2) feelings about, emotional response to the description and characterization (of self, role...).

Method of Analysis

Data were gathered during three structured, tape-recorded interviews: the first, prior to the beginning of school; the second, three to four weeks later; and the third, between November 15 and December 15. Additional data were obtained during classroom observations, unstructured interviews and telephone conversations. Responses to each question of the three structured interviews were transcribed onto individual cards which were then grouped into categories based on the seven major research questions. Additional

categories were formed when existing categories were not applicable. When it became apparent that responses were similar or overlapping, categories were combined. Thirty-three categories were thus formed. These 33 categories were then organized around two major dimensions: first, those pertaining to FYTs' perceptions of themselves, events, and conditions in their life-space; second, those pertaining to FYTs' perceptions of others in their life-space. The following 21 categories comprise the second dimension:

(a) advantages and disadvantages of teaching and the importance of teaching to the FYT
(b) career expectations
(c) fears, worries, concerns
(d) expectations and opinions of self as a person
(e) expectations and opinions of self as a teacher
(f) expectations and opinions of what the FYT perceives students expect
(g) expectations and opinions of student responses to factors of school life
(h) expectations about non-instructional activities
(i) expectations of good discipline and opinions of present discipline
(j) expectations of satisfactory day
(k) expectations and opinions of teaching
(l) expectations of perceived satisfactions
(m) evaluation of self as teacher
(n) facilities, teaching materials, and conditions

(o) necessary teacher knowledge

(p) opinions of teacher training program

(q) opinions of subject matter and grade level taught

(r) worst day

(s) surprises

(t) typical day

(u) advice to FYTs from FYTs

Structured interview response cards comprising each of the above categories were examined and summarized in order to assess the potential richness and meaning of each category. Complementary categories were again combined to increase descriptive power, and those with limited data were discarded. The following seven topics were selected as particularly promising:

(a) teacher satisfactions from their teaching and/or school life

(b) discipline, fears, worries, frustrations, failures, and problems

(c) perceptions of self and/or self as teacher

(d) surprises

(e) career plans

(f) opinions of teacher training

(g) how FYTs measure their progress

Anecdotal records, informal interviews, conversations, and classroom observation data were then combined with the structured interview data for the final analysis and summary reported below.

Results

Surprises: Recognition of the unexpected. Periodically, FYTs were asked what had surprised them, what they had discovered in their teaching experience which they had not anticipated. Their answers were as varied as the teachers and their school settings. First year teachers' surprises can be said to fall into three categories: (1) underlying assumptions in the school culture, (2) new self-perceptions, and (3) what is entailed in the teaching job.

As newcomers to a particular school, FYTs know more or less about the attitudes of the staff, students, and community. Seventeen teachers became aware of these overt and tacit assumptions gradually or abruptly. Six were surprised to find their colleagues act unprofessionally; one who began her teaching with a strong respect for her superiors, was amazed to hear teachers in the lounge laughing at the principal day after day. Another was surprised one morning when, arriving a half hour later than usual, she found many teachers signing in with her just seconds before the bell.

Although some FYTs think they know in advance the standards and values of the community, at least four were in for surprises. One was surprised by the lack of parent concern; another, by the positive contributions of parents. One intended to take a field trip on a Wednesday evening, only to be told unequivocally that Wednesday would be impossible--it is church night in that community. Seven teachers

confronted unanticipated student attitudes--no respect for authority, no valuing of good grades.

Besides being surprised by the different assumptions of other people, seven FYTs made unexpected discoveries about themselves during the first months. Some were unhappily surprised to discover their inability to control their classes. One, who terms himself "a nice guy," found out that students perceived him as having a temper. One was surprised that his unexpressed anger in class was evident to the observing researcher. One teacher had never thought that she would find herself wishing she had some other type of job.

A third category of surprises occurred to eleven teachers as they tried to carry out their teaching jobs. The students were smarter, or slower, than they had expected, or they behaved better or worse than anticipated. There was an astounding amount of time and energy needed for preparing lesson plans, doing paper work, establishing routines, or maintaining discipline.

In all, the teachers mentioned a great many unexpected discoveries which necessitated more work and changes in approach, or resulted in unwelcome realizations about the school environment. Their unhappy surprises (39) far outnumbered their happy ones (10).

Surprises about students (17) were reported more than those about teachers (8), administrators(2), the community (4), or the job (5).

Many more surprising realizations came about gradually (35) than as results of single incidents (13).

The first year teachers discovered segments of reality not congruent with their pre-teaching expectations. Most of the unanticipated discoveries were emotionally deflated. Teachers were surprised at themselves and at how different were the new people with whom they came in contact. In addition to having to readjust their expectations of self and others, they found themselves having to alter some of their teacher efforts as well. One of these changes, relationships with students, is discussed below.

Satisfactions. In the pre-school interview, the FYTs were asked what they considered to be the advantages of teaching, and what they expected to find satisfying. In subsequent interviews, teachers related what they felt had been their most satisfying points so far, and what they found advantageous about teaching.

Several satisfactions were mentioned repeatedly. Without first considering when or by whom these satisfactions were reported, it is interesting to note that, among the total 229 satisfactions reported, those mentioned most often were:

(a) Being with students (mentioned 25 times)

(b) Seeing students learn (22)

(c) Feeling personally successful (19)

(d) Seeing students behave; having class flow smoothly (19)

(e) Seeing students enthusiastic (18)

(f) Giving of oneself to help students learn (11)

No other satisfactions were reported more than 5 times.

"Being with students" was mentioned in the pre-school interview more often than any other anticipated satisfaction; half (nine) of the FYTs enthusiastically looking forward to contact with children and young people. By November even more teachers (12) had reported "being with students" as a satisfaction to them.

In August, 4 teachers mentioned the expectation of deriving satisfaction from "feeling personally successful" at teaching. In September there was a sharp increase in the report (8 teachers) of being pleased with one's own professional performance.

The satisfaction "seeing students behave; having class flow smoothly" has two faces. In the August interview, 7 teachers said they would feel good "when things go well" or "when things work out"--the anticipated satisfaction would come from positive events. After three weeks of teaching, satisfaction in this area was suddenly not the positive, but rather the absence of the negative; 7 other teachers felt good "when I didn't have the football players Seventh Period" or "when a real unruly kid was good." By November teachers (5) once again tended to express this satisfaction in a positive manner.

Five teachers initially said that they expected to feel personally rewarded by giving of themselves to help students

learn. In September, however, only one teacher reported this satisfaction. By November, though, 5 teachers said they had actually experienced the rewards of making extra efforts to help children learn.

Two sources of satisfactions were not foreseen by these FYTs: relationships with fellow teachers and with parents. Neither was mentioned in the August interview. By September 3 teachers began to find satisfactions from knowing their colleagues, and by November 4, others had. In November 2 teachers reported satisfactions from experiences with parents.

When the pattern of satisfactions for each teacher was analyzed, it became evident that the majority of FYTs showed more change than stability from their anticipated satisfactions to their actual satisfactions. However, no characteristic pattern of change emerged, other than the increase, in all cases, of the number of satisfactions named from the first to the latter interviews. While mentions of anticipated satisfactions totaled 66 in August, reports of actual satisfactions totaled 109 in November.

These first year teachers entered their classrooms expecting to derive satisfaction from being with the students, but in the first three weeks something happened. They encountered enough problems so as to feel happy when no problems occurred; they did not have time to give students all the help they had thought they could. Just being able to cope with the situation gave them a sense of satisfaction,

however. By November they were well enough established to feel more enjoyment from the students, and the faculty as well. They had time to help students, and feel good about it, and they were inclined to view students as behaving well, rather than not behaving badly. Further, they were finding that more satisfactions were available to them from teaching than they ever would have anticipated.

Trouble-sets. For most teachers, the first year is a time of problems, frustrations and worries. While it is possible to speak in general about such categories as "discipline problems of FYTs" or "FYTs' concerns about administrators," much insight is gained from considering each FYT's "trouble-set." A trouble-set can be thought of as a group of problems, unique to each FYT, resulting from a mix of personalities, contexts, expectations and values.

For example, one FYT perceived that she had difficult discipline problems. Her problems were aggravated by her worry that the principal would find out that she was having problems, and by her belief that she could not turn to anyone for help because "teachers must solve their own problems." Another FYT took quite some time to admit to himself that he was not evoking from the students the kinds of behavior he felt necessary for learning to occur in his classroom. Once he reached this realization, he went directly to the principal for help and advice, because the principal had one time offered to help wherever he could.

Problems, worries, and frustrations of FYTs emerged from three sources: self, other people, and what might be termed procedural matters. The importance of each of these sources varied, but each was involved in the life space of every new teacher.

First, reports of FYTs indicated that the self was a major source of concern. The FYT may worry about his/her own competence in teaching a particular subject, in managing a classroom, in confronting discipline problems, in evaluating student progress, and so on. Sometimes the FYT was frustrated by things which he himself did: inconsistent handling of classroom discipline incidents, inability to make and uphold decisions, and the inability to separate the professional from the personal life. The FYT might have had a problem finding time to maintain a satisfying social life. S/he might have suffered from a lack of sleep, from nightmares, or from a variety of ills that were otherwise unexpected. In all of these instances, the trouble-sets of the FYT were, in part, founded in the self.

The second element of the FYTs' trouble-sets came from the presence or actions of other people in the life-space. Some FYTs worried about what others, including students, thought of him/her. Some were frustrated by a colleague's behavior toward him/her, or a parent's seeming lack of concern about a child. Some had trouble accepting the comments of the principal, or problems dealing with disruptive student activity. Parents, principals, fellow teachers, counselors,

staff and students--all came in contact with the FYT in a variety of ways. Nearly always, however, the FYT was the person newer to the setting. Often, accidentally or unaware, these people added to the trouble-set of the initiate.

The third element of the trouble-sets of some teachers was procedural matters. Procedural matters must function smoothly if life in the classroom is to be productive and satisfying. An FYT might have had difficulty running the ditto machine, or in knowing the procedures to follow to reserve a film projector. Some FYTs were overwhelmed with paperwork either from the administration or from student assignments. Some had many preparations to make, and did not know how to organize and use school time efficiently. Some were confused by the size, number, organization, or goals of the prescribed curriculum guides. These matters of procedure added significantly to the trouble-sets of FYTs.

Students and the new teachers' perceptions of self. A part of the study was to explore with the FYTs their concepts of themselves as teacher. During the first interview, prior to the beginning of school, 14 of 18 indicated that they expected to have positive interpersonal relationships with students and there was little or no indication of worry about these relationships. Relationships with students include a range of personal, instructional and managerial interactions. Two other FYTs, while not stating that they expected positive relationships, indicated no particular apprehension in this area. Finally, 2 FYTs did state their

concern about their managerial role, particularly maintaining classroom control.

In interviews held three or four weeks later, 12 of the 18 FYTs indicated that their relationships with the students were of some concern. This early emergence of concerns about student relationships would seem to complement our finding that all teachers reporting satisfactions in the managerial realm expressed those satisfactions as the absence of undesirable student behavior.

During the third interview, 14 of 18 FYTs indicated that they were changing their behavior in response to what they perceived as inappropriate student behavior. The direction of this change was consistent: more controlled and controlling relationships with students. Each of these 14 FYTs perceived him/herself as having some form of interpersonal problem with students, varying from loss of patience to extreme inability to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct in class. Four of these 14 had what they perceived to be very severe problems. Another 4 FYTs believe they had what could be categorized as definite problems, and the other 6 had mild problems with children or dissatisfaction with their response to "misbehaving students." Only 4 believe that they had no interpersonal or managerial problems with students. None of these 4 teachers was in kindergarten or the first six elementary grades. Three of the 4 teachers felt they could "loosen up" slightly after their more formal relations with students during the early months. Two of

these teachers who considered "loosening up" were the only ones to express during the first interview real concern about losing control of their students.

The analysis of these interviews suggests a trend among FYTs toward greater recognition of the complexity of their interpersonal or managerial relationships with students during the early months of teaching. Again, this recognition of complexity varies from those who must now accommodate their feelings of irritation and their overt actions (e.g., yelling at students) to their initial views of the relationships with students to those FYTs who experienced major problems and who saw themselves as having no semblance of control of their classes. There is also the tentative suggestion that those who were worried about these relationships prior to their beginning as teachers are less likely to perceive themselves as having difficulty later on. Finally, these data suggest that those who have severe problems after the initial months are individuals who, perhaps unrealistically, anticipated no problems in the interpersonal or managerial relationships with students.

Attitudes about teacher preparation. Since there is a close temporal relationship between the FYTs' professional preparation and the onset of professional responsibilities, they were questioned regarding their attitudes about their teacher preparation programs. The first year teachers held their respective teacher preparation programs in overall positive regard. Only one FYT of 17 felt that the teacher

education program was of little or no value. Sixteen of 17 felt that either their programs were excellent, or that they had good and bad points but were adequate overall.

When the interview data on attitudes about teacher preparation programs were examined over time, it was found that expressed attitudes either remained stable, or changed in a positive direction. None of the FYTs' attitudes about teacher education programs changed in a negative direction. As the school year progressed, they held their professional preparation in an increasingly positive light.

Nine of 17 FYTs in the present investigation expressed the point of view that teacher education programs, at very best, could not completely prepare a prospective teacher for the real world of teaching. These teachers made statements such as "I was prepared as well as I ever could be, but so much more is needed that can't be put into a book or course; it's just being out there and doing." They expressed the belief that the effective scope of teacher training programs falls short of preparing teachers for the realities of classroom life. These 9 FYTs were not critical of this short-coming in their preparation, but rather supported the notion that "there are some things they just can't teach you. . . .No one can prepare you for this."

No apparent relationship was found between attitudes about teacher education programs and problems encountered during the first half of the school year. In several cases,

even though the FYTs knew they were having serious problems in their teaching, they did not see it as a fault of their professional preparation.

These FYTs' positive attitudes toward professional preparation suggest a shift from what seemed to be the cynical criticism of teacher education in the Sixties. Ominous, however, is the strong feeling that the present system of teacher preparation is simply not adequate to the task of preparing teachers for the situations and tasks encountered during the first year.

Career Plans. Upon beginning their teaching careers, FYTs remained somewhat noncommital regarding their career plans. Nine of 15 FYTs projected only two to three years ahead to see themselves still in the classroom; six saw themselves in classroom teaching 5 years or more. Nine of the FYTs expressed the possibility of moving to another field that might or might not be related to teaching.

Two of the FYTs in this study resigned their positions before Thanksgiving of this first year. In both cases there were "reasons" not related to teaching that were identified by the FYTs for their decisions. In the judgment of the researchers, problems and frustrations experienced by these two FYTs influenced their courses of action. In both cases it was an abrupt end to a once-hopeful career plan.

Conclusion

What emerges from these interviews of beginning teachers is a strong sense of the uniqueness of each teacher's experience. Nevertheless, certain patterns and dominant themes have come to the surface. As a group, they appear to be entering a new career with a very tentative professional commitment. Although they have been through sixteen years of schooling, including teacher training, the majority are rather quickly and unexpectedly confronted with a variety of issues and frustrating conditions. One specific surprise is the quality of their relationships with some students and what is for many an inability to maintain appropriate standards of behavior in the classroom. Nevertheless, as a group these new teachers gain a great deal of satisfaction from their contacts with students. In their initial interviews they reveal themselves to be extremely student-oriented, and in spite of difficulties in developing with students an appropriate relationship, students, nevertheless, remain a great source of satisfaction. Finally, these new teachers enter the profession with, and continue to have, positive feelings toward their teacher training experiences.

The First Year Teachers' Relationships with Others: One Dimension

First Year Teachers' Relationships with Others: One Dimension

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this portion of the First Year Teacher Project Interim Report is to explore the first year teacher's perceptions of his/her relationships with others and to describe those relationships which provide support and/or nonsupport to the first year teacher's view of self as teacher. Two terms are central to the discussion of the relationship of first year teachers to others. A relationship has been viewed to include interactions that have affect for the first year teacher either positively or negatively. The time dimension to this concept is of relative importance to the individuals. A relationship is said to exist or be describable if a verbal or nonverbal exchange is reported to have taken place between the first year teacher and an "other." An "other" was originally conceived to be an individual in a particular job-related role (administrator, student, teacher educator, fellow teacher, or parent) who might have contact with a new teacher during the year. As the study progressed, our definition was altered somewhat to include any person about whom the first year teacher has talked.

A number of studies have been conducted which focused upon the relationship between others and the first year teacher. Most of these investigations have been role-oriented; they have looked at the job-role i.e. principal, experienced teacher,

custodian, etc. and how these others affect the first year teacher's feelings, performance, or ideational state. Previous research has focused primarily on the relationship of others to the first year teacher in three general ways: (McIntosh, 1976)

1. Studies which examine the formal channels of communication: principal-teacher or student-teacher. The focus in these studies has been on superordinate-subordinate interactions and how those interactions help the neophyte deal with exigencies of a new environment.
2. Studies which focus on the informal lines of communication which influence the first year teacher, like teacher-teacher interactions or information new teachers receive through "grapevine" sources.
3. Studies which focus on the socialization of first year teachers. These investigations view the changes in a teacher's state as a result of his/her interactions with a variety of implicit and explicit school-related factors.

While these studies have provided this project a sense of direction in terms of focusing attention upon the existence and importance of relationships between first year teachers and others, they have not provided a comprehensive description of the relationships which new teachers have with others, thus encouraging the thrust of this portion of our study.

It has been recognized that a large part of the lifespace of a new teacher involves human interaction. Others enter the teacher's lifespace, interact with the teacher, and contribute to the teacher's perceptions of the relationship. Many view these interactions as crucial to the beginning teacher's feelings of success or failure--crucial because it is through a teacher's interactions with others that s/he tests expectations and constructs a concept of self-as-teacher. Though interactions with others is not the only factor influencing the growth and development of the teacher-self, the literature suggests that one's perceptions of self are influenced greatly by relationships with other people. Bennis, Berlew, Schein and Steele (1973) note that any interpersonal contact an individual has will either reinforce his/her feelings about self or disconfirm them.

As a new teacher enters the school in the fall, s/he brings some uncertainties, some questions, and some doubts. The new situation--new roles, new responsibilities, new relationships--helps to support and confirm the individual's expectations, behavior, or concept of self-as-teacher. Most teacher educators would agree that it is important for the new teacher to gain confidence and bridge the gap between expectation and reality. The nature of the relationships which develop between first year teachers and others can bear upon the overall experience of the new teacher--feelings of success, satisfaction, belongingness, and acceptance or feelings of failure, dissatisfaction, isolation, and rejection. Confidence

and acceptance of self-as-teacher, then, may be greatly influenced by the supportive interactions the new teachers have with others.

Research Questions Relevant to "Influence of Others"

This report is about one phase of a larger study. At the outset, a large number of general research questions were formulated with the intention of using them as "guiding questions" to give focus to the study. It was also understood that, as the study progressed, the focus would be refined and possibly redirected. The following represent those original research questions relevant to the "influence of others on the life of the First Year Teacher":

(1) What are the first year teacher's perceptions and feelings about: (a) administrators, (b) students, (c) teacher educators, (d) peers, (e) parents?

(2) What is the nature of the relationships between and among the FYT and those in the school environment throughout the first year of teaching specifically with respect to: (a) administrators, (b) students, (c) teacher educators, (d) peers, (e) parents? Among the persons with whom the FYT has relationships, who has the greatest impact on his or her feelings, perceptions and behaviors?

(3) What evidence is there that the FYT's perceptions, feelings and behaviors are affected by persons or ideas outside the immediate school environment?

Method of Analysis

The investigators are analyzing data with three goals in mind: (1) to attempt to understand and explain each teacher's experience from his/her perspective, (2) to explain each teacher's experience from the perspective of the investigator, and (3) to generate information about the group of first year teachers.

Because the intent of the present study is to discover "what is out there," the investigators have been proceeding tentatively and in ways that generate information and direction. The focus of the present study has been continually refined and methods of data collection and analysis reformulated. It is believed that an inductive, trial-and-error approach is useful in a long-term exploratory study because it enables the investigators to pursue questions that might have been overlooked if specific and rigid hypotheses had been adopted. This approach is not without faults nor does it reduce the number of headaches involved in most investigations. There can be--and are--problems of reliability and validity. The investigators do not intend to ignore them. Efforts are being made to address those questions, but it is also necessary to understand that there is so much to the experience of a first year teacher that the first comprehensive study of the first year of teaching must sacrifice some techniques (not rigor) to begin to get hold of the problem.

At the time of this writing, first year teachers' accounts of their relationships with others have been analyzed and

ordered in the following manner: data have been collected through formal interviews and informal conversations with first year teachers about their relationships with others since the week before school started. After pouring through transcripts of these interviews the investigators attempted first to look at the perceptions of new teachers in relationship to standard job-roles of others. They noted a wide variance among the ways teachers perceived others in job roles and inferred from a thorough examination of teachers' reports that the first year teachers experienced others affectively, frequently noting a type of supportive or nonsupportive distinction. As a result of this investigation, a judgment was made to order the first year teacher's reports according to the support/nonsupport dimension. Not all teacher talk about others is represented in this dichotomy but the discrimination occurred enough that the investigators felt justified in making this judgment. Also the investigators acted upon the assumption that the first year teacher is in a position requiring adjustment and that the occurrence or non-occurrence of support would shape that adjustment. Following these judgments and assumptions a framework of categories emerged from the data.

Having grouped the data into supportive and nonsupportive categories, it became obvious that there were different kinds of supportive and nonsupportive relationships. The investigators decided to group like kinds and constructed six category sets, enumerated and explained below. They understand that the categories are not mutually exclusive and that no single person

could fit one category nor could his/her relationship with the first year teacher be perceived as falling in the same category all the time. While the original research questions focused upon relationships that first year teachers have with people in the usual school roles, the choice of supportive/nonsupportive category sets allows the investigators to look at encounters/relationships which occur across social and school roles. Since other studies have looked at teacher perception in school roles, the investigators thought it important to include those roles but go beyond them in hopes of generating information that might have previously been overlooked.

Interpretations

The first year teacher interacts with many different people during the year. As indicated earlier, all interactions with "others" can be viewed somewhere on a continuum from supportive to nonsupportive. Initially, this was the only way in which the data was grouped. However, as the study progressed and as the interviews and field notes were examined subcategories started to evolve. Although it was impossible to delineate a clear and concise distinction between these conceptual subsets, it did seem reasonable to organize them along a continuum parallel to the one outlined for supportive-nonsupportive "others."

SUPPORTIVE.....NONSUPPORTIVE

cooperator.....troublemaker
problem solver.....double binder
reinforcer.....doubter-embarrasser
advice seeker.....advice giver
socializers-sunshiners.....cold shoulders-deflaters
confidant-empathizer.....judge-silencer

What follows is a discussion of each of these concepts as manifested in the lives of first year teachers. The basic characteristics of each concept are delineated and examples have been drawn from the interviews to make the concepts more meaningful and understandable.

COOPERATOR.....TROUBLEMAKER

Respond to needs, wishes, interests, or feelings	Reacts without considering needs, wishes, interests, or feelings
Willing to reciprocate/helper	Unwilling to reciprocate/irritator
Encourager	Frustrator
Respects and recognizes limits	Tests limits
Assists when Asked	Doesn't offer assistance

Behaviors often associated with the cooperator-trouble-maker dichotomy are those which are viewed to be either helping or not helping the first year teacher. The cooperator is one who responds freely to the needs, wishes, interests, or feelings of the new teacher. S/he aids the teacher with tasks at hand. Always willing to reciprocate, the cooperator asks frequently if there is anything s/he can do to make life easier for the FYT. S/he encourages and helps out when needed, yet is unobtrusive. The cooperator recognizes the limits set by the FYT and respects them.

> I have a hard time decision-making with the team especially when it comes to who is participating in the events....I had a girl who was on Reserve last year and I put her on Varsity because I felt she would do better this year because it would boost her ego a little bit to be on Varsity. She hasn't done better and I hate to wave a Reserve over her but I have to in order to make the team win....The other night we had a quad meet and we had a big rival there and right before the floor exercises I went over to Sarah and said, "Sarah, I'm going to consider team score tonight." Then she said, "I understand that. I think you should." You know, she understands.
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> Mr. DeSantis is really nice. He's the principal and is in charge of discipline.
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> Whenever I have a discipline problem I can send a note to the office and he'll come down to talk with the student. Like the other day, I'd tried everything I knew with Lisa and she was still off-the-wall. Well, Mr. DeSantis took her out of class and down to the office. He talked with her, and later on I did too. But getting her out of class just then was really helpful.

The troublemaker, on the other hand, is disruptive. Not considering the impact of his/her behavior on the FYT, the troublemaker puts his/herself first in any situation. S/he reacts without thinking about the needs, wishes, interests, or feelings of others. Always exploring and testing the limits set by the new teacher, the troublemaker is awaiting opportunities to irritate or frustrate the novice. S/he neglects or avoids assisting the new teacher causing friction between his/herself and the beginner. The agitator, in short, is annoying and disquieting being a source of difficulty for the first year teacher.

> There is sometimes a sense of tension in Ann's group (student). We all wait to see if she will behave or be rude. And she has two people (Sally and Jill) who HATE the way she picks on them and throws fits. The other day Ann accidentally hit Sally in the eye with an eraser. Sally went into an hysterical fit. I made Ann apologize and we went on with the class but the girls were visibly upset by the incident. During recess Ann kicked Sally on the playground and called her a bitch. When she came back to class Ann, I think, pulled a chair out from under Jill and made her cry. I'm at my wits end with that child.
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> My husband doesn't like my job. He says that teaching is just talking and giving assignments. He can't understand why I'm so tired everyday, and he insists that I still keep up the housework. We've been arguing a lot--fighting. I'm trying to adjust my teaching and work to get it all done without causing us trouble, but I don't know how it will work out. He'd be much happier if I just stayed at home.

Researcher: Have you had any conflicts?

Teacher: Only one--the wrestling coach, and that's extracurricular activity, and he's apologized. One day I asked him to help me bring down the mats, and he (he told me later he'd been having a "bad day") started yelling at me. I just turned around and carried the mats down myself. Four girls and I carried them down.

Researcher: What was he yelling at you for?

Teacher: Because I asked him to spare 5 guys for about 5 minutes, long enough to carry the mats downstairs. I consider that quite reasonable. Then when I came upstairs to get the mop, he yelled at me to wash out the mop when I was finished, to keep "his" mop clean; when the janitor told me specifically that that mop was for everyone's use. Which was basically enough to make me pretty angry--to want to hit him in the face with the mop. My gymnasts could tell how angry I was by when I was mopping the mats. They asked me what happened and I told them. The coach apologized about a week later.

PROBLEM SOLVER.....DOUBLE BINDER

Communicates clearly and effectively	Gives conflicting messages
Promotes success	Promotes failure
Promotes stability	Promotes confusion
Provides opportunities for self-assuredness	Creates self-doubt and blames others
Assumes responsibility for his/her own actions	Assumes no responsibility for his/her own actions
Provides appropriate information about school life; gives many helpful hints on what to do to get along as a teacher	Doesn't communicate clearly or completely

When the FYT enters the classroom for the first time there is a great deal of information which must be assimilated. Some of this information can be gained through formal faculty meetings or through conferences with the principal. Frequently the principal sits down with the beginning teacher and delineates the material necessary for the him/her to function effectively in the new milieu. Often, however, a formal presentation like this is not sufficient and as the year progresses the beginning teacher needs additional knowledge. This knowledge may be of a substantive or managerial nature. When such knowledge is needed the beginner usually goes to someone s/he can trust; someone who can communicate clearly and effectively--a <u>problem solver</u>.

> In my first interview I said I would go to the principal for assistance. Now I think I would go to the curriculum coordinator. I find her to be much more helpful. She knows the curriculum materials real well and can suggest many activities which might work in my classroom. Also, I just feel more comfortable going to Miss Francis with a problem.
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> The principal, Mr. Brodbeck, is a good source of help for me. I try to see him at least once per week to keep him informed of what's happening in my class. He used to teach the same subject I teach, and when I'm having a problem, I know he'll have a couple good suggestions to make.
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> One day, while I was waiting for a parent to arrive for a conference--it was going to be rough because the boy was going to be expelled--Mr. Brodbeck came to my room and he talked. He told me that a very similar circumstance occurred to him as a first year teacher: he was faced with explaining to a

parent why his son was to be expelled. He made me feel like I was not to blame for what had happened; that these things sometime happen and teachers just have to learn to deal with it.

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We had a faculty meeting two days ago. I left it feeling really crummy. A lot of the teachers were talking about all the things they're doing or planning to do in their classes. When I heard some of their ideas, I realized that I had nothing like that to offer. I felt like I was just wasting time and not getting anything done.

Yesterday, I went to the principal, Mr. Hobart, and told him exactly how I felt. We talked for at least an hour and a half. Mr. Hobart explained that he could understand my feelings and he'd be willing to help me get some ideas going. I told him what I was doing and he made some suggestions, especially about the way I was running the reading program. He also has arranged for me to observe a male teacher in another elementary school so I can see how he handles his class. That will be helpful. I'll do that next Thursday.

Unfortunately, the new teacher doesn't always receive sufficient or accurate information to act on. The beginner may check with a colleague or supervisor only to discover that conflicting messages are being sent. This creates anxiety and doubt. The <u>double-binder</u> is one who promotes confusion and gives conflicting messages. The beginner goes to the double-binder for assistance, but walks away confused. Should I do X or should I do Y? What does the principal expect of me? Maybe I'm not doing as good a job as I thought? Because the double-binder sends conflicting messages, the new teacher never knows how s/he is doing. When conflicting signals are sent, the receiver tends to fear the worst rather than to anticipate the best. Thus, the double-binder creates self-doubt and blame rather than success and stability.

French 3 is making crepes, and one kid picked out Brandied Apple Crepes. The home economics teacher said why don't I ask the principal about it, so yesterday after school I went to him and explained the situation. I asked him what he thought about using brandy in school. He said he'd leave it up to me, but since I'm a FYT he'd advise against it--some parents are just looking for an excuse to cause trouble.

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This is really bizarre. Judy, the student who was giving me such a hard time in class is back in the school again. The principal brought her in today. Of course all the students knew what had gone on, but we acted like nothing unusual was happening.

See Judy was a problem right from the first day. After just three weeks I went to the counselor, the principal, and the headmaster to get some help. No one had much to offer. I told them Judy should not be in this program or school. But they didn't do anything.

Then one day, Mr. Fredericks, the headmaster, had a blow out with Judy. He came down on her hard, and decided to expel her from the school. I wasn't even involved in the decision. After it was all done with, Mr. Fredericks called me to his office and told me he didn't want that kind of thing to happen again with one of my students. He held me responsible! I tried to explain that I was the one who suggested that Judy did not belong here in this school, but he acted like he didn't hear me. Somehow I got blamed for it all.

Now Judy is back in my class. I guess the expulsion was not allowed by central office. What am I supposed to do with her now?

REINFORCER.....DOUBTER-EMBARRASSER

Acknowledges teacher efforts	Ignores teacher efforts
Expresses faith in teacher	Doubts teacher capabilities
Impresses teacher that s/he will always be there; stable and supportive	Cynical; not willing to back teacher
Recognizes worth accomplishment	Questions worth accomplishment
Promotes sense of well-being and satisfaction	Acknowledges inadequacies and feeds dissatisfaction
Is teacher advocate/ champion	Teases; puts teacher down; is teacher demoralizer/ denigrator

Persons who acknowledge teacher efforts and support them--emotionally, intellectually or physically--are reinforcers. They express faith in the teacher. Their very presence, or their statements or their actions--each, or all--function to sustain teacher efforts. Through their recognition of personal-professional worth and accomplishments they nourish a sense of well-being and satisfaction. They serve as advocates for the teacher. They are teacher champions.

> Yesterday I was eating lunch in the lounge and one of the teachers started teasing me saying, "Look at Mary eat. Doesn't she eat well for a first year teacher?" Everyone started laughing. I didn't really understand what was going on until another teacher said, "Didn't you hear what Mr. Wilson (the principal) said about you in the staff meeting? He said that Miss Knox is really doing a fine job for a first year teacher." That really made me feel good!
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> I really have a tough teaching schedule and, with coaching, I'm really busy. I'm the only teacher with 6 teaching assignments. Most of the others have 5 and some have 4. In addition to a free period and a lunch period, they have a learning center period where they sit in there and guard--which lets them do all the paperwork and planning they want. And with all my coaching and everything a lot of teachers say, "Oh, you poor little thing...." S___ told me she was sitting in the lounge and she heard the other teachers talking about the heavy load I have and how they feel sorry for me.

The contrary is represented by persons who ignore teacher efforts or doubt teacher capabilities. They question motives and worth and promote doubt. Often they seem cynical. Rarely

do they give the impression that they will support the FYT. Their actions seem to question the FYT's worth and accomplishments. They promote dissatisfaction through acknowledgement of teacher inadequacies. They tease and are "put-down" artists. They are teacher demoralizers; teacher denigrators; they are doubter-embarrassers.

> I'm still wondering if I'm doing the best job I can. The kids are reacting to me as if it is all a big joke.
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> My classes are really nice this time. I like all my classes except one. It has just got the nastiest boys in it. When I put my suit [swimsuit] on for the first time, they started catcalling and all this so I just sent them to the office.... I was really surprised. I would never had expected that because usually the teachers have never dressed for swimming in this school, but I think the kids really appreciate it when teachers get actively involved. But those boys were awful and that embarrassed me. I was really upset and I don't like that class very much. The girls are really good but I don't like some of those boys.
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> There are some parents who think that "little Johnny" never does anything wrong and that a paddling is definitely out of the question. They're sure he hasn't done what I said he did.
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> One of the girls on the team has smarted off to me quite a bit now. She's the little girl whose parents came in and had a real big argument with me because I wouldn't put her on the varsity. And the reason--the main reason--that I didn't think it was good because she couldn't handle it and the other girls would suffer. But I couldn't tell the parents that so I told them that she might not handle defeat in high school competition very well. Of course they wouldn't believe that, you know. So, as it went,

she did very well and I finally had to change her to varsity.

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Last Tuesday I was sitting in the teachers' room grading spelling papers. My kids were at music. After several minutes two of the primary teachers came in. I've talked with them before but I don't know them very well. Then Mr. S_____, the other male teacher, came in. It started right away.

As he walked past me he looked at the spelling papers and said, "Boy! They're not doing very well, are they?" I said, "No," but I thought, "What business is it of yours?" Then he commented on my using X's to mark the wrong ones. I hadn't thought of it but I don't believe it makes very much difference what mark you use. Well, my kids were really doing poorly on the test and I was upset enough as it was. Then when Mr. S_____ spied Jodi's paper marked with 14/20, he said, "Geez, Jodi was my best student last year. She always did better than this." Well, I had had enough. I collected my papers and went back to my room. But I don't think they know I was upset with Mr. S_____.

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Every time I walk down the hall one of the assistant principals says something like "If she got any smaller, she'd go down the drain!" You know, it gets tiring after a while....And now he said something about me being married and that gets really tiring.

ADVICE SEEKER.....ADVICE GIVER

Trusts and respects the first year teacher	Gives unsolicited advice and tends not to trust and respect the first year teacher
Values the first year teacher's competence and personal qualifications	Seeks to change the first year teacher
Likes the first year teacher	Tries to mold the first year teacher or to his own image

The advice seeker is someone who trusts, respects and values the FYT's competence. S/he is someone who seeks advice but does so in a very humble and respectful manner. The advice seeker is not condescending; nor is the advice seeker interested in "one-upsmanship." That is, s/he is not asking for advice in order to give it. The reasons for the inquiries are legitimate. The advice seeker is genuinely interested in obtaining the help of the beginning teacher.

> A number of the teachers at this school seem to have problems with discipline. I have talked with them about how to handle the students and frequently they have asked me to help them. In fact, I paddle students for other teachers, sometimes. The woman across the hall isn't used to working with young children, so she asked me if I would spank her misbehaving students. I have also responded, occasionally at least, to the queries of other teachers on how to discipline a misbehaving child. I think that is rather unusual for a first year teacher. Usually new teachers go to other teachers for advice on such matters.
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> I'm back in study hall again. Barbara and I handle it together. Really, I handle it, because Barbara doesn't do a very good job of it.
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> What had happened was this. In September she and I were given the 6th period study hall. But most of the students who were supposed to be there never came. The most we ever had was 27. After a few months the numbers had dwindled to less than twenty, so the principal transferred me to the lunchroom duty. I liked lunchroom because you don't have to insist on quiet and there are three other teachers there.
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> Well, Barbara was not able to handle study hall by herself, it seems, and she asked the principal to move me back. The numbers had increased slightly too. When I went back to study hall, I was able to get order. Barbara cried.

She said she felt really incompetent; not even able to get the control a FYT could get.

Advice givers seem to be much more common in life than advice seekers. The same holds true in the school setting. As we analyzed our data we found many examples of advice giving, but few of advice seeking. The advice giver seeks to change the FYT to his/her own image of a good teacher. The advice giver gives unsolicited suggestions on how to teach, how to control students, and how to deal with parents. The advice giver is frequently trying to mold or shape the new teacher. The concern is not with what is good for the FYT, rather how can the FYT be changed to fit the advice giver's view of reality. The advice giver tells the neophyte how to walk the students to and from special areas or instructs the FYT on various techniques which can be (and should be!) used to control unruly students. The advice giver is like a nosey neighbor, s/he spends a lot of time minding everyone else's business.

Everybody gives out advice. I guess you have to take it in and analyze it, figure out what you want to do, then either throw it out or remember it and use it....The thing I've heard the most is that you really have to be super-strict. Don't let the kids get away with anything.

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On days like today when it seems like every minute with 8th period class is a trial by fire, I can't even face Mrs. B (team teacher). I know how easily she handles students and it is like being

slapped in the face to try to explain to her my problems. She says to me, "Don't let them (the girls) get away with rude behavior." So what do I do about it? There's the problem--if the children don't cooperate because <u>they want to</u> there is really no "or else." And don't think they don't know it. When they start working me over, talking loudly, and on purpose I get angry inside but also embarrassed and upset at their ability to behave so poorly in my classroom. I see it as a reflection of me and Mrs. B seems so smug as she watches me struggle.

SOCIALIZERS-SUNSHINERS.....COLD SHOULDERS-DEFLATERS

Recognizes and includes teacher in conversations, school events and social activities	Ignores and excludes teacher from conversations, school events and social activities
Affiliative	Nonaffiliative
Contributes to feelings of camaraderie	Aloof, condescending
Optimistic	Pessimistic
Celebrates life	Sees life as difficult, displeasing struggle
Energizes others	Deflates others

Persons who recognize the teacher and engage him/her in conversation are socializers-sunshiners. They are likely to include the teacher in school events and social activities because s/he is recognized as a person and not because they need to "fill a position" or to "ask everybody." Socializers-sunshiners exude camaraderie and are affiliative. They are often optimistic and celebrate life. They are invigorated through their invigorating. Their love of life has the effect of energizing the first year teacher.

> Last week was really a hard week for me. I'd been having trouble with the students and my husband had been giving me a bad time at home because I always came home tried and had papers to grad. Bill Sampson stopped by my room on Friday afternoon to give me a special invitation to TGIF with the faculty. He bolstered my spirits when he said, "As social committee chairman I beg you to come tip a few with us after school." He was so nice that I went and had a great time with everyone.
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> My children's smiles have been really satisfying. The times that I've been really mean, or feel that I've been mean, they still smile and say, "see you tomorrow."
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> Some students continue to make teaching worthwhile. Susie and I have a close and rather nice relationship. The other day she told me she was glad I was her teacher instead of Mrs. Davis who used to teach 4th grade but now teaches 2nd. Not that she doesn't like Mrs. Davis but that she prefers my personality and teaching style. What a nice compliment! That made my day!

The contrary is represented by persons who appear to ignore the teacher and appear to avoid conversation with him/her. They seem to request FYT participation in school events or social activities only because the FYT is an employee of the school. Otherwise, they are perceived as excluding him/her from such affairs. Usually they are aloof or condescending and are often nonaffiliative. Many approach life as one might approach a difficult, displeasing struggle. As a result, they seem to be pessimists. With little reason to love life and with small penchant to sociability, they often deflate the hopes and aspirations of the FYT. They are <u>cold shoulders-deflaters</u>.

> Well, I always consider myself easygoing and easy to get along with. I like to enjoy the people that I have to come face-to-face with everyday. Unless I go to the library for lunch, I can go through days and never see any of my fellow teachers. A lot of times when I do go to the lunchroom I don't put anything into the conversation just because I have nothing to say, and I'm a talker! So I haven't really felt a part of the faculty at all. Sometimes things will come up and I don't even know they are supposed to be happening or that we are going to do this or that, but it seems like everyone else is informed. It's not like I don't keep my ears open. I like the people....I would like to be friendly. I just keep waiting for the right time to come along.

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> Researcher: You just reminded me of what you said earlier in the year about the other teacher, Ms. H., who was here, the one whose place you took. At that time you were worried about her returning.
> FYT: Yeah, I'm still worried about it. The other day I was standing in the hall with Rose and another teacher came up and she was talking about Ms. Henry. She goes, "Well, what's Ms. Henry going

to do? Is she looking for a job?" I think it's really rude for this lady to talk about Ms. Henry in front of me....She's almost saying, "Is she going to get her job back?" I was really upset. I almost turned around and walked away.

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How has my husband been reacting to my teaching job? Well, this job has been taking a lot of time. But, you know, before, I would usually get home before 3:30 and my day would be through. In the preschool I would have plenty of time to do my planning during the day, because the kids were there so long and because they had naptime. But now I have to spend a lot of my time at home to get things ready for school. My husband is the type of person who is used to having to fix supper, clean the house or take care of the kid. He wants me to stay home. In fact, we're planning to have another child. But it sort of drives me crazy to stay home <u>all</u> the time....He's not too happy about my teaching.

EMPATHIZER-CONFIDANT.....JUDGE-SILENCER

Trusted listener	Listens but doesn't react
Nonjudgmental	Judgmental, evaluative
Free-to-speak-to person	Discourages expression by his rejection of thoughts and feelings
Makes FYT feel comfortable	Makes FYT feel uncomfortable
Identifies with and understands FYT's perceptions, feelings, thoughts and perspective	Looks but shows no ability to identify with or to understand FYT's experiences
Accepting	Critical
Open	Wary

Behaviors associated with this category of people are concerned primarily with trust. The first year teacher often wants someone to turn to just to talk about school and the feelings, beliefs, desires which s/he associates with becoming a teacher. The empathizer-confidant is the trusted person. S/he provides an ear to the new teacher and creates a nonjudgmental, open atmosphere so that the first year teacher feels free to speak his/her honest feelings about the teaching experience. The empathizer-confidant identifies with and understands the beginner's perceptions, feelings, and thoughts about the first year of teaching. S/he is accepting of the FYT regardless of what is said and makes the new teacher feel comfortable while talking.

The following incidents are illustrative of the kinds of support the empathizer-confidant can provide:

> My husband is the one in my life closest to me. He listens when I tell him about my teaching, and he has really been supportive, like when I first started teaching I was so busy that I wasn't doing anything around the house and we went out to eat, and he pitched in and helped....If I have problems, I confide in my husband, I feel comfortable telling him all kinds of things about my teaching.

* * *

> My parents are both teachers. When I am really Having a hard time or feel low I go over to see them. They are really terrific--so understanding. They tell me what a great job I'm doing and how I'm worth so much more than my school is paying me.

* * *

I'm involved in the FYT study coming out of OSU. I'm working closely with one of the researchers. We get together regularly.

He observes my class and sees me teaching. He knows my students. He knows what problems I've had and am now having.

I'm pretty honest with him. I've told him things that I wouldn't tell anyone else in the school. Because he knows why my class is like he can understand what I'm talking about.

I've found him very helpful. When I need help with grades, he's able to make some good suggestions. He's always encouraging for me. If I feel down, I can call him and talk it out. I talk and he talks. We spend a lot of time. I don't know who I'd go to without him.

The judge-silencer creates feelings of distrust through his/her behaviors. From this person, the FYT creates doubt and uncertainty about him/herself becoming a teacher. The judge-silencer discourages expression of feelings and thoughts by rejecting either verbally or nonverbally the new teacher. S/he is wary and often openly critical of the new teacher's behavior. S/he observes the FYT but shows no ability to identify with or to understand the teacher's experiences. The judge-silencer would rather sit silently, listen without overt reaction, and then make a judgment about the FYT's behavior with no regard for the feelings of the new teacher. The judge-silencer makes the FYT uncomfortable.

Today I thought I had planned a really exciting lesson for the students. They worked in groups making up skits that they were going to put on in front of the class. The kids were a little noisy, I suppose, but not out of hand. The last class was the worst of all. They were loud. After school

as I was coming back upstairs from busy duty, Mrs. W., the group's homeroom teacher, stopped me in the hall and said she had something she thought I might be interested in. She took me to her room and gave me a set of papers she'd had the students write during study period about why they were so noisy in my class. That really hurt my feelings. I'll never be able to understand why she did that. I just took the papers and went back to my room and cried.

* * *

I don't know, I hope they are looking at me positively. Sometimes I get the feeling that counselors are going in and out of here to see how I'm handling my classes. They will stop and watch and I'll think come on girls be enthusiastic, show them that you are learning something. Once in a while I'll think, boy they probably think I'm a terrible teacher. I think that they are thinking that sometimes....That's how I feel when they observe my class, like I'm doing a shitty job.

* * *

I avoid Mrs. Justus. She's <u>too</u> professional or else she seems to be. I feel inadequate when I think of her. She has an air about her of being superior. She's been teaching now for over ten years and I just know someday she's going to walk up to me and say, "You're someone who is doing absolutely nothing. You shouldn't be a teacher."

Suggested Directions

Hunches. Having grouped FYT expressions about others into the supportive/nonsupportive categories, we have made some inferences and value judgments which have contributed to "hunches" about the influence others have for FYTs. The hunches stated here represent only a beginning. We report them because we consider: (1) some to be valuable to the further unfolding of this project, (2) all to be relevant to further "ecological" and/or experimental research on the first year of teaching, and (3) this project and research building on it to be contributive of a knowledge base from which to begin educational action.

As written, the hunches refer to others in the life of the FYT. Others cut across roles such that the reader could substitute any school-related role (such as experienced teacher, administrator, student, parent, custodian, etc.) with the word "others" in the statements below. Also others may refer to persons in family or social roles (such as husband or close friend) with whom the FYT interacts. The hunches are:

- As the year progresses, the extent to which others have been perceived as supportive/nonsupportive influences the degree to which the FYT feels successful/unsuccessful.
- As the year progresses the extent to which others have been perceived as supportive/nonsupportive influences the degree to which the FYT develops positive/negative attitudes toward students, self, administrators, parents, and school.

- FYT's perceptions of others' support/nonsupport influences the kind of curricular, instructional, and classroom management decisions s/he makes.
- The degree to which others perceive the FYT as being supportive/nonsupportive influences the degree to which the FYT receives others' support/nonsupport.
- Initially, FYT's perceptions of support/nonsupport are influenced by his/her self-image and self-esteem. The degree and nature of the influence may vary.
- FYTs expect others to understand their problems. Failure of others to accept the FYT's perspective is seen as lack of support.
- The degree to which an FYT feels comfortable with the decisions s/he makes influences the degree to which others' questions and actions are perceived as threatening and nonsupportive.
- FYTs are likely to differ in what they see as being supportive or nonsupportive behaviors.
- Most FYTs hesitate to seek support because they believe such actions are indicative of ignorance and incompetence.
- "Others" who are viewed as being unskilled at interpersonal relations appear to be more nonsupportive than supportive.

Some possible uses of the category sets. The category sets were constructed to make sense of the data generated from a larger study of the lives of first year teachers. In addition to this study, the sets seem to have use for future research on FYTs and for the implementation of educational action. Possible uses are:

Present Study. The frequency of supportive/nonsupportive relationships perceived by individual FYTs will support the descriptions of their experiences. Collectively, frequency counts for all FYTs will yield a matrix consisting of the number of interactions for each category set-role combination; e.g., confidant-student, double binder-administrator, etc. These data will form the basis for tentative, hypothesis-generative conclusions.

The degree to which individual FYTs perceive having been affected by the category set-role combination will support descriptions of their experiences. Collectively, these accounts will form the basis for tentative, hypothesis-generative conclusions relative to the degree to which FYTs are influenced by certain kinds of supportive/nonsupportive relationships with persons in different roles.

Events which have influence for FYT will be categorized then given full description paying special attention to the ways the actors constructed those events. Tentative, hypothesis-generative conclusions will be made relative to the ways FYT and others construct supportive/nonsupportive relationships.

Also, value statements will be made relative to the desirability of particular actions by the participants.

Further Research. Further research which extends this investigation's use of the category sets is suggested. Such research could serve to: (1) clarify the category sets, (2) expand the category sets, and (3) provide further description of the way supportive/nonsupportive relationships are constructed.

The category sets can be used for "ecological" kinds of investigation that have as their foci the influence of others on the lives of first year teachers.

Finally, the category sets can be used to provide a perspective and a mechanism for experimental research which seeks to identify how supportive/nonsupportive relationships influence FYT performance and satisfaction.

Educational Action. The category sets can be useful for pre-service teacher education, school personnel and for the FYTs.

Teacher education programs might help students to become aware of their "needs" for support and to help them develop "coping" abilities.

School personnel might become more aware of their behaviors and how they have effect for the neophyte and prepare to receive and support him/her.

FYTs who are more fully aware of the influence others might have for them may be able to plan a program of self-development to coincide with their first year of teaching.

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